



Sophie Nash Riddick Parker

July 5, 1928 - January 8, 2022

Sophie Nash Riddick Parker, 93, of Milwaukee, WI died peacefully and beautifully, just as she lived, on January 8, 2022.

Born on July 5, 1928, in Portsmouth, Virginia, Sophie was the youngest of three daughters of the late Alfred Thomas Riddick, Jr., and Caroline Leckie Hatton Nash Riddick. She was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Charles Walter Parker, Jr., her son Thomas Williamson Parker, and her sisters Olivia Jeannette Riddick Rhodes, and Mary Jane Riddick Coleman.

Her long and happy life began in Portsmouth (Glenshella), VA., in a family full of music. Her family spent many hours singing around the piano - a tradition she passed on to her own family. She graduated from Churchland High School in 1945. She was involved in sports, drama, cheerleading, chorus, yearbook illustration, student government, and art. Sophie was voted Most Popular and Most Original, which seems to have lasted another 75 years!! She received her B.A. from Converse College, Spartanburg, SC, in 1949. Although she began her college years as an accomplished pianist, she was chosen to study under Professor of Art, August Cook. That began her lifelong passion and love for the fine arts. Besides excelling at her craft, she was involved in student government, choir, and was on the May Court. She laughed easily and often, earning her the nickname "Spicy".

As a young girl, the family spent wonderful summers on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. When she was 10 years old, there was a 16-year-old boy next door named Charlie Parker. Ten years later that boy, by then a Virginia Military Institute graduate and World War II veteran, asked her to dance - and the rest is history! Sophie and Charlie were married on November 26, 1949, in Portsmouth, VA.

They began their life together in Richmond, VA, where their daughters, Porter and Caroline, were born. After a brief move to Philadelphia, Charlie's career at Allis-

Chalmers Manufacturing Corporation brought them to Milwaukee. They then welcomed their twin sons, Charles and Tom. Sophie quickly became an active member of the community and participated in a wide variety of organizations, including Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Boys/Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, Junior Achievement, University School of Milwaukee, and several arts organizations. Sophie began her 64-year affiliation with St. Mark's Episcopal Church in 1958. She sang in the choir, was a member of the St. Agnes Flower Guild, and was one of the first two women elected to an Episcopal Church vestry in Wisconsin.

During Charlie's 40-year career at Allis-Chalmers, Sophie was at his side as they entertained at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Country Club, the University Club, and the Milwaukee Club. In addition, they traveled the globe, developing many close friendships which were maintained by Sophie's personal correspondence over the years. Everyone looked forward to receiving yearly Christmas cards featuring her artwork. Even though they took many international trips, Sophie always enjoyed returning home to Milwaukee and spending time at their lakeside cottage in Oostburg. Sitting on the screen porch was always one of her greatest pleasures, as it reminded her of her childhood by the water.

In 1979, Sophie and her best friend, June Turner, turned their eye for color and interior decorating into a business called Designing Women. For 20 years, they worked together to transform any room into a warm, inviting space remarkable for its elegance and charm. Eventually, Sophie returned to painting and had several shows of her work- some large, all exuberant- in the area. For years, her Thursday Painter group was often seen painting "plein air" in Lake Park. Never accepting payment for her paintings, she insisted that her buyers designate a charity and donate the proceeds.

A Virginian by birth, Sophie had a joyful and kind spirit, expressed through her signature Southern accent, infectious smile, beautiful artwork, and deep connections to others. As a fabulous mother, she gave us wisdom, guidance, and love. She was always so very proud of her children, which she was happy to tell everyone. Her sweet nature and zest for life will make her greatly missed by all who were lucky enough to know her.

Sophie is survived by daughters Mary Porter Parker Hutto (Randolph) of Atlanta, GA, Caroline Davis Parker Robertson (Jay) of Dallas, TX, son Charles W. Parker, III of Fairfax, VA, and daughter-in-law Elizabeth Fellenbaum Parker[CR1] of Milwaukee. She was "Drans" to her loving grandsons Lee Parker Hutto, Charles Massey Hutto, Jared Taylor Robertson (Kristina Nelson), John Parker Robertson, and Dana Charles Robertson, Hatton Scharf Parker, and Ian Riddick Parker. She also survived by her cherished niece Jane Page Coleman, of Mesilla, NM, and four great-grandchildren: Molly Braybrook, Ella Robertson, Emil Robertson, and Avery Nelson.

The family will be eternally grateful to her longtime caregiver, Colyer Hansen, companion Sarah Mattingly, and Jody Armata of North Shore Funeral Home

for their compassion and kindness. The wonderful, loving staff at St. John's on the Lake, her residence since 2004, were truly angels to her.

Memorial Service Friday, June 10 at 11:00 AM at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2618 N. Hackett Ave; Milwaukee 53211. In lieu of flowers, please send donations payable to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2618 N. Hackett Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211(stmarksmilwaukee.org) or the St. John's Employee Holiday Fund, 1840 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202 (saintjohnsmilw.org)

"Everyone should take a class in painting - you will never see the world in the same way again."

Tribute Wall

AD

“ I was fortunate to be part of the Thursday painters and always loved being around Sophie. Her creative zest for life and generous spirit were truly a joy!She was a dear and I loved her sweet accent!! So sorry for your lossAudrey Dulmes

Audrey Dulmes - June 06, 2022 at 12:00 AM